



# Labor & Economic Briefing

David C. Hollister, Director

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Here is a summary of headlining accomplishments from the last month:

## Creating & Retaining Michigan Jobs

**Governor Leads Investment Mission to Japan:** Governor Jennifer M. Granholm lead an investment mission to Japan all designed to build stronger relationships with the leaders of Japan's automotive and new technology industries. The Michigan delegation, which included Department of Labor &



**Shiga Governor Yoshitsugu Kunimatsu (left) with Governor Granholm. Shiga is Michigan's sister state in Japan. The meeting took place aboard a boat named the "Michigan" on Shiga's Lake Biwa on the second day of Granholm's investment mission to Japan.**

Economic Growth Director David C. Hollister, met with more than 150 representatives of business, higher education, and government during the week - all with the goal of promoting Michigan as the premier state for advanced automotive, life sciences, and high-tech manufacturing investment. The week-long mission included individual meetings with senior-level executives from more than 20 Japanese companies. The Governor addressed an automotive industry seminar at the World Expo in Nagoya and hosted a life-sciences seminar in Osaka with the presidents of Michigan State University, the University of Michigan and Wayne State University to promote Michigan as a North American center for life sciences research, development, and commercialization. The Governor also announced **a \$36 million expansion** of DENSO's North American headquarters in Southfield, which will **create 250 new jobs** by 2010. Currently, about 600 Japanese divisions, affiliates, and subsidiaries operate in Michigan, employing 100,000 people and contributing \$8 billion to our economy.



**Governor  
Jennifer M.  
Granholm**

### **\$250 Million Severstal Investment in Dearborn to Retain 11,000 Jobs:**

Governor Granholm announced on June 21 that global steel producer Severstal Group will **invest up to \$250 million** to upgrade its steel mill facility in Dearborn. The investment means that a total of **11,300 Michigan jobs will be retained**, including 2,005 directly by the company. The MichiEDC approved a Single

Business Tax credit valued at more than \$28.7 million over 20 years to win the project. The city of Dearborn has approved a 50 percent abatement of the steel producer's new real and personal property taxes for 12 years valued at approximately \$19 million. The Severstal Group is a major steel manufacturer based in Russia with locations in 14 Russian Federation states. It is the 18th-largest steel company in the world, and employs approximately 150,000 people. To establish a presence in the North American market, the company acquired Dearborn's Rouge Steel in April 2004.

**Governor Announces Lafarge North America Expansion in Alpena:** Lafarge North America, a leading producer of building materials including cement, aggregates, concrete and gypsum, will **invest up to \$75 million** to retool and expand its operations in Alpena as a result of state and local brownfield tax incentives approved by the MEDC. The upgrades, announced by Governor Granholm on June 21, will increase the facility's competitiveness and **keep 230 jobs** in the community. Lafarge will implement state-of-the-art material processing and conveyor systems and finishing operations. The company will use brownfield tax incentives that include a Single Business Tax credit valued at more than \$5.2 million and state and local tax capture valued at \$1.5 million to demolish a vacant storage building.

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**Smiths Aerospace to Grow in Grand Rapids, Create 76 New Jobs:** Smiths Aerospace will invest \$2.4 million to expand its operations in Grand Rapids, adding a new business service center to perform financial-transaction processing on behalf of North American businesses. The project, announced by Governor Granholm on June 21, will create 76 jobs, including 65 directly by the company. The MEDC approved an SBT credit valued at more than \$648,000 over six years to win the project over competing sites in other states. Cascade Township has proposed a 50 percent abatement of the company's new personal property taxes valued at \$40,000 over 10 years. British-owned Smiths Aerospace designs and produces integrated avionics equipment for the military and the civilian aviation industry. Its products are integrated into virtually every American and British military aircraft. The company employs more than 1,300 at its U.S. headquarters in Grand Rapids. In May 2003, the MEDC offered Smiths a Single Business Tax Credit valued at more than \$2.1 million to locate a new avionics development lab in Cascade Township over a competing site in Maryland.



**Jim Epolito**

**MEDC Board Chooses Jim Epolito to Lead State's Economic Development Efforts:** The MEDC announced on June 29 that James Epolito, president and CEO of the Accident Fund from 1995 to 2005, will be named the MEDC's new president and CEO. The MEDC board is expected to approve Epolito's contract before he assumes his new post on September 1. Epolito, 50, is well known for having turned the Accident Fund into an industry leader. During his tenure, he grew the business from a \$117 million single-state insurance provider to one serving businesses in 40 states and generating more than \$500 million annually. Last year, it was the 15th largest workers compensation insurance company and the 9th most profitable of all insurance companies. For the last four years, the Accident Fund was rated among the Top 50 best-run insurance companies by Wards Financial. Epolito previously headed the Blue Care Network-Health Central division of Blue Cross-Blue Shield of Michigan. Current MEDC President and CEO Donald Jakeway will lead the organization's international economic development efforts and high profile events that include the Forbes CEO Conference on Mackinac Island in September and the

National Football League Super Bowl in Detroit next February.

**Granholm Outlines Five-Point Economic Plan, Will Result in Unprecedented Investment in State's Future:** Governor Jennifer M. Granholm spoke with local Chambers of Commerce and area residents while on a five-county visit to northeast lower Michigan, where she outlined a five-point economic strategy to fuel Michigan's 21st century economy and create tens of thousands of good-paying jobs. "The foundation of a good life is a good-paying job," Granholm told residents in Alcona, Arenac, Gladwin, Ogemaw, and Oscoda Counties. "The cynics will look at this plan and say we can't do it. But, I argue we must. The naysayers will say we can't afford to do it. But, I say, with the changes in our global economy, we can't afford not to." A centerpiece of Granholm's economic plan is the Jobs Today, Jobs Tomorrow initiative to create jobs immediately and diversify and grow Michigan's future economy. It will:

- create 72,000 high-wage jobs by investing \$2 billion to establish Michigan as a global center of research in new technology and emerging industries;
- create 36,000 jobs over three years and make Michigan a better place to live and do business by accelerating \$800 million in critical state infrastructure projects, by giving local communities new tools to carry out their own public investment projects, and by sparking private development projects;
- give children in school and adults in the workforce greater access to higher education and to the skills they need to fill both the jobs of the future and job vacancies that exist in Michigan today.

To create jobs of the future, Granholm announced a 21st Century Jobs Initiative that will make Michigan the nation's epicenter of alternative energy research, a leader in the biotech industry, and a hotbed for homeland security R&D. The initiative calls for a \$2 billion investment over 10 years to grow Michigan's economy by increasing research in our university, corporate, and non-profit research institutions and by stepping up efforts to turn new ideas into new commercial products. Michigan voters will be asked to approve a ballot measure this November that would authorize the Governor's plan to create 72,000 jobs over the next decade. Granholm said her plan will have revolutionary impact on the state's economy: "Imagine Michigan, the state that put the nation on wheels as the state that made those wheels run on pollution free fuel cells, the state that made these United States independent of foreign oil." To put thousands of Michigan residents to work this year, Granholm proposed a Jobs Today Initiative that will speed up state and local infrastructure improvement projects that were scheduled to begin over the next decade and provide incentives that will lead to new private development and renovation projects. This acceleration will create some tens of thousands of new jobs over three years in the building trades, construction, and related service industries. By repairing roads, modernizing schools, cleaning industrial sites, and renovating downtowns, the Jobs Today Initiative will also improve Michigan's quality of life and make the state more attractive to job providers. Two other pieces of Granholm's five-point plan are:

- The Mi Opportunity Partnership to cut unemployment by rapidly filling 90,000 job vacancies that exist in the state today. Granholm said the new MI Opportunity Partnership could match and place as many as 30,000 citizens who are looking for work with a job this year through training programs focused on the skilled trades and health care fields.
- The Michigan Jobs & Investment Act (MJIA), the administration's plan to make business taxes in Michigan more attractive for job providers. The MJIA will broadly restructure business taxes in Michigan, cutting the existing Single Business Tax rate by 37 percent for those businesses that pay it. Under the plan, three out of every four businesses that pay the SBT will see a reduction in their tax rate. Granholm's proposed changes will help ensure that existing major employers continue to keep jobs in Michigan, will help small businesses grow, and will encourage research and development companies to create new high-growth jobs in this state.

"Job growth, coupled with a great quality of life, will make Michigan a magnet for jobs, investment, growth, people and opportunity," said Granholm. "This proposal helps Michigan retain jobs, attract the jobs of the future, and protect schools and health care for our citizens. The changes we're introducing today make Michigan's business tax structure simpler, fairer, and more attractive for the job providers we want to stay and grow in Michigan."

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**Michigan Site Network (MiSiteNet) To Be Housed in MEDC:** The MEDC announced on June 28 it will assume administration of the MiSiteNet Web site. The site helps promote Michigan as a location for job creation and includes a database of over 10,000 industrial and commercial properties in Michigan available for potential development. It was created in 1997 as a joint venture between the MEDC, DTE Energy and the Michigan Economic Developers Association to provide a free information and marketing tool for real estate brokers, developers, and business clients seeking commercial and industrial property in Michigan. MiSiteNet provides digitized photographs, location maps, aerial photographs, detailed topographic maps, plat maps, traffic counts, utility providers, brownfield site data and information on existing structures. Users can search by site type (land or building), zone classification and county or municipal location. Also featured are community profiles, area overviews, tax incentives, and local, state and federal Web links to real estate resource information. One development already under way is an upgrade to the reporting system which will enable site representatives, owners, and MEDC staff to track the exposure each property receives and analyze Web site traffic patterns, leading to enhanced usability.

## Fostering Vibrant Michigan Cities and Urban Centers

**Port Huron Named All-America City:** Port Huron is one of 10 communities recognized as an All-America City by the National Civic League. The award recognizes communities that band together to tackle local issues instead of relying solely on government. A year ago, Port Huron received a \$99,000 state grant under Governor Granholm's Cool Cities initiative that looks to link arts and culture with economic development to attract and retain younger residents to Michigan's cities.

**Public Works Funding on the Way to 13 Michigan Communities:** Governor Jennifer Granholm announced on July 7 that 13 communities will receive a total of more than \$5.1 million Community Development Block Grant funding to support public infrastructure projects that will create jobs now while creating the foundation for a stronger economy in the future. The following 13 communities were chosen to receive funding: Corwith Township, Decatur, Elberta, Hesperia, Iron River, Lake Linden, Lake Odessa, Mancelona, Mesick, Millington, Newberry, Powers and Tawas. Grant recipients were selected on their overall eligibility and the impact the project would have on the community. Priority was given to projects that are ready to begin construction in the immediate future, have sufficient local matching funding and have completed preliminary cost estimates. Michigan Public Works funding benefits cities, villages and townships where at least 51 percent of the population is composed of low- and moderate-income residents as defined by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. The funds may be used for projects that upgrade existing public infrastructure systems by replacing deteriorating or obsolete systems or by adding capacity to existing but burdened systems.

**Howell Celebrates Coveted Cool Cities Main Street Award:** State officials joined the leaders and citizens of Howell on July 5 to celebrate their Cool Cities Main Street designation. The award, one of just four statewide, will give the city access to \$200,000 in technical assistance and training as part of a long-term management approach to revitalizing and maintaining a successful downtown. Ishpeming, Grand Haven and Midland also received the designation. The program is implemented through a partnership between the MEDC and the Michigan State Housing Development Authority. This is the third year the MEDC has administered the intensive training program modeled on the four-step approach developed by the Main Street National Trust for Historic Preservation in Washington D.C. The Main Street approach encompasses promoting long-term design concepts, marketing, community cooperation and organization, and encouraging economic restructuring to strengthen and expand the existing economic base to capitalize on new business opportunities. The competitive process began in March with 10 communities submitting letters of intent from which finalists were selected to present formal applications to a team of officials from 12 state and local development organizations. All finalists were judged to have highly meritorious proposals and were designated as this year's Main Street communities.

**Three Western U.P. Communities Awarded Funding for Public Improvements:** Iron River, Iron County and Caspian in the western Upper Peninsula have been awarded a total of \$1,131,751 in Community Development Block Grant grants, Governor Granholm announced on July 14. Iron River and Caspian will upgrade their municipal sewer systems while Iron County will use the funds to support the location of a new customer contact center. Specifically:

- Iron River, \$768,000, improvements to the sewer system as part of the Michigan Public Works program. The city and the Iron County Task Force will contribute an additional \$430,000 to the project.
- Caspian, \$128,188, sewer system improvements as part of the Michigan Public Works program, with the city contributing \$20,000.
- Iron County, \$235,563, renovation of a building to be purchased by the county and leased to Global Response North for its customer contact operations, a project expected to generate \$598,000 in private investment and creation of 30 new jobs. The county will invest about \$235,000 to acquire the building.

**Ishpeming Celebrates Valuable Cool Cities Main Street Award:** State officials joined the leaders and citizens of Ishpeming on July 11 to celebrate the city's Cool Cities Main Street designation announced by Governor Jennifer M. Granholm. The designation, one of just four given statewide, will give the city access to \$200,000 in technical assistance and training as part of a long-term management approach to revitalizing and maintaining a successful downtown. Grand Haven, Howell and Midland were also chosen to receive the award from an initial pool of 10 applicants. The program is implemented through a partnership between the Michigan Economic Development Corporation and the Michigan State Housing Development Authority. This is the third year that the MEDC has administered the intensive training program modeled on the approach developed by the Main Street National Trust for Historic Preservation.



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**Seven Michigan Communities to Benefit from Public Improvements:** Governor Granholm on July 12 announced a total of \$1,124,000 in grants to Albion, Cadillac, Calumet, Fruitport, Holland, Oshtemo and Three Oaks for public improvements as follows:

- Albion, \$20,000, development of a marketing and recruitment plan for downtown revitalization; Albion Downtown Development Authority and Albion Community Foundation will contribute \$5,000 and \$15,000, respectively
- Cadillac, \$224,000, on-the-job training backing a \$6 million expansion expected to create 140 new jobs by Avon Protective Systems, designer and manufacturer of military and general purpose respirators
- Calumet, \$100,000, redevelopment of property being vacated by River Valley State Bank; non-profit Main Street Calumet will invest \$151,900 in the project, with the village contributing \$50,000
- Fruitport, \$70,000, water line extension to accommodate expansion of Metal Arc Inc. representing an investment of \$525,000 by the maker of industrial lab metal cabinets used by R&D firms, universities and hospitals; the township will contribute \$333,750 to the project expected to create seven new jobs
- Holland, \$150,000, water system improvements supporting a new \$2.7 million facility for Agritek Industries expected to bring 50 new jobs; the township will provide an additional \$25,500
- Oshtemo Township, \$200,000, road and sewer system upgrades to support construction of a new \$2 million plant creating 10 new jobs by Harrison Packing, the Kalamazoo area-based pickle packing company; the township will contribute \$130,000
- Three Oaks, \$360,000, public streetscape improvements facilitating investment of a total of \$705,000 by four businesses in downtown redevelopment; the village will contribute an additional \$341,556 and the County Road Commission \$233,000

The grants are being made available by MEDC with Community Development Block Grant funds.

**Governor Announces Grant for Bridge Improvements in Saranac:** Saranac will receive \$100,200 as part of the Michigan Public Works Program to support enhancements to the village's Bridge Street Bridge. As announced by Governor Jennifer M. Granholm on July 7, the federal Community Development Block Grant that is being made available through the MEDC is expected to create new jobs and economic opportunities for the community. Improvements to the bridge will include a new asphalt surface, beam joint repairs, new guardrail and lighting and electrical service. The village will contribute \$66,800 in support of the project. Saranac was one of 33 Michigan communities announced in February to receive Michigan Public Works funding, one part of the Governor's \$30 million, two-pronged Grow Michigan Communities Initiative that also includes funding for Michigan's Downtowns and Gateways. The MEDC administers the state's Community Development Block Grant funds received from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

## Accelerating Training for Health Care Professionals

**Granholm Announces Over \$17 Million to Accelerate Health Care Training, Move People into Workforce:** Governor Granholm announced July 20 that 13 Michigan universities and community colleges will receive over \$17 million in grants to accelerate training for nurses and other health care professionals. The grants, which are part of the Governor's MI Opportunity Partnership, are expected to train over 1,200 health professionals, including RNs, LPNs, clinical nurse faculty, and allied health professionals such as respiratory therapists and pharmacy technicians. "The goal of MI Opportunity Partnership is to get people working now," said Granholm. "These grants will enable our universities and community colleges to meet the demand for high-skilled health care workers quicker and help ensure that people wanting to work in this growing field can get the training they need." MI Opportunity Partnership was unveiled in the Governor's 2005 State of the State. The program, designed to proactively steer unemployed workers into high-demand career fields, including health care, set a goal of matching 30,000 unemployed workers with jobs by the end of the year. In May, the MI Opportunity Partnership pledge drive began and already over 14,000 job vacancies have been committed. Granholm made the announcement today at Mott Community College in Flint, which is one of the institutions receiving funding. Mott will partner with Genesys Regional Medical Center to train 83 RNs and other health professionals with a grant of approximately \$3 million. "Our chief nurse hears constantly from frustrated students who have completed classes but can't get needed clinical experience or who are struggling to get into health care programs at all," said Department of Community Health Director Janet Olszewski. "Thanks to collaborative efforts like Mott Community College and Genesys Health System, these grants will help ensure that we are training and employing people quickly." Community colleges and public universities attached to Michigan Regional Skills Alliances that have partnered with hospitals were invited in April to submit proposals to apply for the funds. The grant proposals were reviewed by a team from the departments of Labor & Economic Growth (DLEG) and Community Health (DCH). In total, 21 grants were made to 13 different community college and universities. The grants are being made available with Medicaid Disproportionate Share Hospital (DSH) funds. The MI Opportunity Partnership specifically targets the health care industry because of the need for skilled workers and the existing vacancies. According to a recent study released jointly by DLEG and the DCH, the state will need to fill more than 100,000 professional and technical health care jobs in Michigan over the next decade. "Michigan has people out of work and an industry in need of workers," DLEG Director David C. Hollister said. "Thanks to the MI Opportunity Partnership and these grants, we can match those needs, meet the growing labor demands of the health care industry, and put people to work without compromising quality."

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## Making Michigan a Leader in the Global Economy

**Wayne State University Hosted Nanotech Symposium at World Expo:** Wayne State University hosted a nanotechnology symposium on July 13 and one related to global business issues on July 14 at the first World Expo of the 21st century held in Aichi, Japan. Both events were held at the United States pavilion. Governor Granholm will participate in World Expo later in July, as one of only nine U.S. governors to attend. The expo, being held through September 25, is expected to draw 15 million people from around the world. A five-minute film about WSU will be shown on a large screen outside the U.S. pavilion throughout both days. Wayne State will be the only university from Michigan at the World Expo hosting events in the U.S. pavilion. For more information, visit <http://www.wayne.edu/japanexpo05>.

**Michigan Flexes Life Sciences Muscle at BIO 2005 Conference in Philadelphia:** The MEDC hosted a pavilion at the BIO 2005 International Convention June 20-22 in Philadelphia to promote Michigan's rapidly expanding life sciences industry. The annual convention is the largest gathering of bioscience professionals in the world, with more than 18,000 biotech executives, investors, journalists, policy makers and scientists from more than 60 countries attending. The Michigan pavilion on the BIO conference exhibitor floor included more than 20 representatives from the MEDC, Michigan universities, local economic development organizations and life sciences companies. The state's biotech industry is one of the fastest-growing in the nation. Through the Life Sciences Corridor and Technology Tri-Corridor initiatives, Michigan has pumped more than \$220 million directly into life sciences research and commercialization over the past five years. The event closely followed the Governor's announcement that 24 award winners will share \$27.3 million in 2005 Technology Tri-Corridor funding to spur the growth of the state's life sciences industry. Technology transfer from research and development at Michigan's universities in 2004 contributed to 30 new startup companies, 560 new invention disclosures and 134 new licensing agreements.

## Promoting Michigan's Tourism & Travel Industry

**Detroit Picked to Host 2010 "Frozen Four" Event:** Detroit will host the National Collegiate Athletic Association Men's "Frozen Four" hockey tournament in 2010. The games are tentatively scheduled for April 8 and 10 at Ford Field. The NCAA Frozen Four consists of two semifinal games and a championship contest to determine a Men's Division I Ice Hockey champion. The event is currently televised on ESPN. For more details, go to the NCAA sports Web site.

**Three to Represent Michigan at Travel, Cultural and Heritage Summit:** Governor Granholm has named three delegates to the upcoming U.S. Cultural and Heritage Tourism Summit in Washington, D.C. in October. They are Dr. William Anderson, director, Michigan Department of History, Arts and Libraries; Steve Hamp, president, The Henry Ford Museum; and George Zimmermann, senior vice president, MEDC's Travel Michigan. The goal of the summit is to engage leaders from across the country in the travel, cultural and heritage sectors to further the development of new strategies, partnerships and marketing opportunities.

## Making Home & Auto Insurance More Affordable

**Granholm Plans to Deliver Affordable Insurance Through Purchasing Groups:** Governor Granholm, Office of Financial and Insurance Services (OFIS) Commissioner Linda A. Watters, and Office of Community and Faith-Based Initiatives Director Greg Roberts recently announced a new initiative to make home and auto insurance more affordable for good drivers living in urban areas. Granholm said her Administration will help community groups and faith-based organizations create purchasing groups that can negotiate directly with insurance companies for lower rates to garner significant savings for consumers in urban areas who voluntarily participate. "Ensuring that citizens have access to affordable insurance no matter where they live is a critical step in making sure they can afford to live in our cities," said Granholm. "We are asking insurance companies to look first at driving records - not street addresses - when they offer customer's rates." Through the initiative, community groups, churches and neighborhood organizations will team up to create groups of potential customers who have good insurance claims history. The lower risk presented by purchasing group members should result in lower insurance rates than would otherwise be possible. OFIS has sent out a Request for Information (RFI) to insurance companies designed to identify innovative ways that companies could offer insurance by grouping lower-risk individuals together. RFIs are due on August 15, 2005. The information submitted from the RFI will be for analysis purposes only and may or may not be used to develop a Request for Proposal (RFP). If an RFP is developed, it will be done by the buying group, not by the State of Michigan. The Governor's Office of Community and Faith-Based Initiatives will work with local clergy, neighborhood associations, and other groups to find people who fit the qualifications and form the purchasing groups. The Governor applauded the work of local clergy and elected officials who have worked closely with her office to find creative solutions to the cost of insurance. This is the first time the state has made a concerted effort to reduce the costs of insurance in our urban areas. Granholm has worked closely with the Legislative Black Caucus to bring down skyrocketing insurance rates in our cities. Current Michigan law allows insurers to write auto and home insurance for specific groups of policyholders at rates that are lower than what they charge to individual policyholders. All group rates are generally lower because it is less expensive to market insurance to one entire group of people than it is to seek out each of those people individually. Rates can also be significantly lower for groups with better than average loss experience, in other words, groups who are expected to file fewer and/or less expensive claims. For more information, visit <http://www.michigan.gov/outreach>.

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## Making Michigan a Leader in Technology

**Five Michigan Companies on 100 List of Best Places to Work in IT:** Quicken Loans Inc. in Livonia ranks #1 on Computerworld magazine's list of 100 Best Places to Work in Information Technology 2005. The others are: Ford Motor, Dearborn, #32; Comerica, Auburn Hills, #69; DTE Energy, Detroit, #81 and DaimlerChrysler, Auburn Hills, #82. To qualify, participating companies had to have 2004 revenues of \$250 million or more and employ a minimum of 500 U.S. employees, at least 100 of them in IT.

**State Receives IT Award at International Conference:** The Bureau of Commercial Services, Corporation Division, received the 2005 Runner Up Merit Award from the International Association of Commercial Administrators in the Technology: Government to Government category. The state received the award for using technology to improve government to government service. The International Association of Commercial Administrators (IACA) is an association of government administrators of business entity and secured transaction record systems at the state, provincial and national level. Its mission is to aid commerce by improving the level of service provided by its members. Emphasis is placed on greater efficiency in government and in providing superior service at the least possible cost. Michigan was one of the founding members of the association and hosted the conference in 1981. In August 2004 the Corporation Division added images of filed documents to <http://www.michigan.gov/corporations>. Customers love it because they can research information from their offices at any time day or night. They can also print uncertified copies, which saves them time and money. Phone orders have decreased from about 653 per week in 2003 to 444 per week in 2004, a decrease of 32%. Other state agencies and government offices, which obtain copies from us at no charge, can now look up the information themselves and get uncertified copies at their desk for immediate use. Requests for copies from state agencies and government offices decreased by 47% in 2004. The Bureau of Commercial Services, working with the Department of Information Technology web team, designed the interface for adding documents to the web site. The Bureau worked with the DIT Office of Enterprise Security to make the documents available in a secure environment.

**Ann Arbor High-Tech Company Gets Federal Grant:** Solidica Inc. has received a Phase I SBIR (Small Business Innovation Research) grant from the federal Department of Energy through the Office of High Energy Physics. The Ann Arbor-based company will receive up to \$100,000 to fund research into its process of rapidly fabricating complex metal articles layer by layer that enables the use of designs with intricate internal cooling passages that would be impossible using conventional technology. The Solidica process also has the ability to embed small sensor probes directly between the layers which makes thermal profiling possible. Solidica will collaborate in the research with the Argonne National Labs in Chicago. The MEDC awarded Solidica a grant from Michigan's Emerging Business Fund, a program designed to encourage and reward small businesses that successfully attract SBIR grants.

**St. Joseph Tech Company Receives Research Grant from Dept. of Defense:** GeneGo, a provider of databases, software and services in systems biology has received a Phase I SBIR (Small Business Innovation & Research) grant from the U.S. Department of Defense to develop a systems biology suite of tools for analysis of proteomics data. The company, based in St. Joseph, will work in collaboration with researchers at University of Southern California. GeneGo is one of many Michigan companies that are finding success after receiving commercialization funding from the state's Life Sciences Corridor program. The company was awarded \$1.4 million in Corridor funding in 2003.

**Internet2 Upgrades:** The Ann Arbor-based Internet2 project announced on July 13 that it intends to merge with National LambdaRail, which is building a nationwide fiber-optic network. Internet2 is developing new applications for university scientists, technicians, students and others to conduct broadband-intensive experiments via the Web, among other uses. The merger calls for Doug Van Houweling, president and CEO of Internet2, to serve as chief executive of the combined entity.

**Ann Arbor High-Tech Company Gets Small Business Innovation Research Grant:** Velcura Therapeutics Inc. has received a \$1.3 million Phase II SBIR (Small Business Innovation Research) grant entitled "Proteomics-based drug discovery in human osteoblasts" from the National Institute on Aging, National Institutes of Health. The Ann Arbor biotech company received a \$224,000 Phase I SBIR grant in 2003 for a feasibility study of protein expression patterns in human bone formation. The Phase II grant seeks to develop these initial observations into a means of discovering new drugs that stimulate bone formation. The company is developing a drug expected to enter clinical trials in 2006. The company, previously known as Osteomics Inc., took first place in the Great Lakes Venture Quest business plan competition in 2001 and won \$60,000.

**Innovative Michigan Company Part of Military Medicine New:** MC3 (Michigan Critical Care Consultants Inc.) of Ann Arbor has joined forces with another artificial lung company, Novalung GmbH based in Hechingen, Germany, developer of the Interventional Lung Assist artificial lung technology used to treat wounded soldiers as featured in a recent Detroit Free Press story. The partnership of MC3 and Novalung will manufacture and market MC3's Biolung, the world's first total artificial lung. The technology is currently available internationally under a German licensing agreement while the company seeks FDA (Federal Drug Administration) approval to market the product for use in the United States.



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## Protecting Worker Safety

**SC Johnson of Bay City Receives MIOSHA Ergonomic Innovation Award:** SC Johnson's Bay City Operations received the

Ergonomic Innovation Award on July 12th from the Michigan Occupational Safety and Health Administration (MIOSHA). The MIOSHA program is part of the Michigan Department of Labor & Economic Growth (DLEG). MIOSHA Deputy Director Martha Yoder presented the award to Joe Liefbroer, Bay City Site Manager; Judy Woodham, SC Johnson Safety, Health and Environment Manager; Pat Hoist, SC Johnson Ergonomics Committee Chair; and the SC Johnson Ergonomics Committee. SC Johnson corporate officials were on hand to congratulate the Bay City employees, including: Bill Schiller, Vice President – North America Product Supply and Tim Woods, Director - Home Storage Manufacturing. The Ergonomic Innovation Award is issued to employers for creative and effective ideas that have been implemented to reduce worker strain. Ergonomic improvements help employees work safely without needing to over-lift, over-reach, sit or stand too long, or use awkward postures. "Work-related musculoskeletal disorders are the most prevalent and one of the most expensive occupational health concerns in the nation," said Yoder. "Companies like SC Johnson are on the cutting edge of implementing safety and health management systems that effectively address ergonomic hazards in the workplace." SC Johnson operates five plants and one research facility in Bay City. They employ approximately 460 workers, and operate their plants 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.



**SC Johnson's Bay City Operations received the Ergonomic Innovation Award on July 12th from the Michigan Occupational Safety and Health Administration (MIOSHA).**

Products produced at Bay City include Saran Wraps, and Ziploc® brand bags. An Ergonomics Program was established at SC Johnson - Bay City to help effectively minimize and work toward eliminating work-related musculoskeletal disorders and hazards. Some of the ergonomic improvements include: Emphasis and education on the "right tool for the job," Sit/Stand chairs, platforms to make access easier, relocation of controls, ergonomic analysis prior to installation of new equipment, lift equipment (carts, tables, hoists), and stretching and exercise programs. SC Johnson (<http://www.scjohnson.com>) is a family-owned and -managed business dedicated to innovative, high-quality products, excellence in the workplace and a long-term commitment to the environment and the communities in which it operates. Based in the USA, the company is one of the world's leading manufacturers of household cleaning products and products for home storage, air care, personal care and insect control. The 119-year old company, with more than \$6.5 billion in sales, employs approximately 12,000 people globally and sells products in more than 110 countries.

## Creating Cool: The Economy of Arts and Culture

**Grants Help Expand Residents' Access to Michigan's Cultural Resources:** The Library of Michigan recently awarded \$965,000 worth of Digitization for Preservation and Access grants to 10 libraries whose projects represent a statewide effort to digitize valuable and significant local and state-related information held in Michigan. Acting State Librarian Nancy Robertson said such projects - which will ultimately make all these digitized resources available through the Michigan eLibrary ([www.MeL.org](http://www.MeL.org)) - will open up the collective holdings of Michigan libraries to patrons throughout the state, no matter where they live. The recipients of the 2005 Digitization for Preservation and Access grants are: Alpena County Library; Clarke Historical Library in Mount Pleasant; Detroit Public Library; Loutit District Library in Grand Haven; Monroe County Library System; Portage District Library; Regents of University of Michigan, University Library; Superiorland Library Cooperative in Marquette; Wayne State University Library System; and Western Michigan University Libraries. The digitization projects funded by these grants cover a variety of materials such as images and data on more than 15,000 unique Great Lakes vessels; more than 13,000 19th-century and pre-1922 photographs of Detroit; the state's largest collection of 19th-century panoramic (bird's eye view) maps; books, photos, slides, postcards, letters and original artwork relating to the War of 1812; and the Civil War diaries of eight men who served in several Midwestern Union regiments.

**Museum Expansion Expected to Boost Marquette-Area Tourism:** Construction continues on the expansion of the Michigan Iron Industry Museum in Negaunee, a project that will increase the museum's ability to draw tourists to the area. The museum expansion, which broke ground on Phase I in May 2005, is being partially funded by the "Forging Our Future" capital campaign. The steward of Michigan's iron heritage, the Michigan Iron Industry Museum is dedicated to preserving the heritage of the iron ranges and educating children about the story of Michigan's iron industry. The museum is also committed to collaborating with other area attractions to make the Marquette region a true cultural-tourism destination. The "Forging Our Future" project aims to revamp the museum into a year-round facility with an education space where children can learn and play, interpreters can present public programs, and community groups can host meetings and receptions; a new exhibit wing that will protect the locomotive Yankee and allow for changing exhibits; a reference library where researchers may examine photographs, maps and records collected about the iron ranges; an interpretive trail leading across the Carp River to the place where Michigan's iron industry was born; additional parking; and an outdoor area for performances and activities like horseshoes and bocce. To learn more about the Michigan Iron Industry Museum and the expansion project, visit <http://www.michigan.gov/ironindustrymuseum>.



**More than 1,300 Civil War buffs gathered at the Walker Tavern Historic Complex in Brooklyn for the second annual Civil War Re-enactment weekend.**

**Civil War Re-enactment Weekend in Brooklyn Draws 1,300 Visitors:** More than 1,300 Civil War buffs gathered at the Walker Tavern Historic Complex in Brooklyn for the second annual Civil War Re-enactment weekend July 16 and 17. The event - which one visitor called "the talk of the town" - also drew 400 re-enactors (an increase of more than one-third over last year's participation), many from out of state, and vendors from as far away as Tennessee. People even stopped their cars along U.S. 12 to watch the battle re-enactment. Museum staff expects the annual event to continue to grow in participants and visitors. The Walker Tavern Civil War weekend was sponsored by the Michigan Historical Museum System, the Fourth Texas Company E re-enactors, the Brooklyn-Irish Hills Chamber of Commerce and the Lenawee County Conference and Visitors Bureau. Walker Tavern is located in Brooklyn, next to the Michigan International Speedway, in the Irish Hills region. Exhibits and special events at the historic site, a popular inn on the historic Chicago Road during the mid-1800s, interpret Michigan's frontier settlement and stagecoach eras during the first half of the 19th century. For more information, visit <http://www.michigan.gov/walkertavern>.

## Protecting Michigan Consumers

**Michigan Launches Registry to Protect Children from Inappropriate Email:** Governor Jennifer M. Granholm and Chairman of the Michigan Public Service Commission (MPSC) J. Peter Lark announced that on July 1, Michigan became the first state in the nation to launch a child protection registry that will enable parents to guard children from unwanted electronic messages. "Michigan's child protection registry is a great way parents can shield their children from inappropriate email," said Granholm. "I'm proud that Michigan is the first state in the nation to develop this registry and provide a way for parents and teachers to protect our children from unsuitable emails." Michigan's child protection registry, called the Protect MI Child Registry, will allow individuals and schools to register email addresses to which minors have access. In the near future, instant message IDs, mobile phone numbers, fax numbers, pager numbers, and other contact points can also be registered. There is no cost to register. On July 21, 2004, the Governor signed SB 1025, creating the Michigan Children's Protection Registry Act (Public Act 241). Public Act 241 prohibits persons from sending to registered addresses messages about products or services that are legally prohibited for children. Examples include pornography, tobacco, gambling, alcohol, illegal or prescription drugs, firearms, and fireworks. Senders of material are required to remove registered email addresses from their mailing lists within 30 days. If a registered contact receives a prohibited message, a complaint may be filed with the Michigan Attorney General's office. A first violation is a misdemeanor; subsequent violations are felonies. Civil penalties may also be sought. "The Protect MI Child Registry has been designed to be very user-friendly," said MPSC Chairman J. Peter Lark. "Parents and others who have expressed outrage and frustration at the endless stream of unwanted messages to which their children have access now have a way to reduce those messages." The registry was created and will be operated by Unspam Registry Services. For more details on the registry, visit <http://www.michigan.gov/protectmichild>.

**OFIS Creates Internet Resource to Assist Consumers with Health Insurance Decisions:** Selecting, purchasing and understanding health insurance and health coverage options can be a complex experience. To assist consumers in making informed decisions when choosing health care coverage, the Office of Financial and Insurance Services (OFIS) has added a new section to its web page that provides basic information regarding health insurance and health coverage in Michigan. In addition to overseeing commercial health insurers, OFIS is also responsible for the regulation of Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan and for Health Maintenance Organizations (HMOs) in Michigan. OFIS Commissioner Linda A. Watters said, "Access to accurate health care information is a top priority for Michigan citizens. Patients and consumers must have access to all available information before they tackle the selection and purchase of health care insurance. We have simplified the experience by providing this easy-to-use resource." The health care section can be found at the OFIS website at <http://www.michigan.gov/ofis/>. There is a direct link to the health insurance section on the home page (a blue box that says "Health Insurance Information"). Consumers can also find this section in the menu box on the left side of the page under Consumer Services. OFIS staff can also be reached for assistance toll-free at 1-877-999-6442 or by email at [ofis-ins-info@michigan.gov](mailto:ofis-ins-info@michigan.gov).

**Fortney and Little Address Connecticut Credit Union Audience at Agency Seminar:** National Association of State Credit Union Supervisors (NASCUS) President and CEO Mary Martha Fortney and NASCUS Chairman Roger Little, deputy commissioner of the Michigan Credit Union Division joined more than 170 credit union directors, CEOs and managers for the Credit Union Directors Training Conference hosted by the Connecticut Department of Banking June 29. The program covered responsible corporate governance, board succession planning, duties of audit and supervisory committees and discussion of challenges facing credit unions today. Little served as the moderator for a panel on responsible corporate governance. NASCUS appreciates the opportunity to participate in the seminar, and thanks John Burke, banking commissioner for the Connecticut Department of Banking for inviting Fortney and Little to join the program. While at the seminar, Fortney and Little also recognized the Connecticut Department of Banking's NASCUS Re-accreditation and presented Burke and his staff with the official certificate of re-accreditation. Re-accreditation is valid for five years, subject to annual review. Connecticut has been NASCUS accredited since 1990.



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## Making High-Speed Internet Available to Businesses & Consumers

**Grand Ledge, St. Johns to Receive Broadband Via Power Lines:** The Michigan Broadband Development Authority (MBDA) <http://www.broadbandauthority.org> announced it has closed on a \$520,000 loan with the New York-based Shpigler Group, Inc. that will bring broadband over power line (BPL) service to two mid-Michigan communities. Starting later this fall, customers in Grand Ledge and St. Johns will be able to choose BPL for their home and business Internet needs. This will be only the 5th such commercial deployment of BPL technology in the nation. The company will do business as "Lighthouse Broadband" and will be the first provider of its kind in Michigan, offering business and residential customers in Grand Ledge and St. Johns a new high-speed Internet option. BPL technology uses the existing electric distribution grid and in-home wiring to transmit broadband signals to businesses and consumers. Through the use of power lines, BPL signals can be delivered to virtually any home or business without the exhaustive cost of developing new cable or fiber infrastructures. Moreover, BPL affords utility companies the ability to provide enhanced services like outage notification, automatic meter reading, and enhanced management of electric demand. DLEG Director David C. Hollister said, "For Michigan this BPL roll-out will further build the state's reputation as a place where innovative technology can thrive, enhancing the infrastructure for job growth and retention in Michigan. We are thrilled that Lighthouse Broadband has chosen Michigan for this deployment." In its short history, the MBDA has facilitated investments that have supported the largest non line of sight (NLOS) and largest line of sight wireless broadband deployments in the country. In the long term, the ubiquity of power lines could allow BPL providers the opportunity to connect rural residents to the Internet and provide an additional competitive option to consumers and businesses. Performance of BPL is similar to that of cable modem, but unlike cable offers the same speeds both upstream and downstream. David Shpigler, founder and President of the Shpigler Group, stressed the important role the MBDA plays in helping emerging broadband companies leverage their capital for expansion activities in Michigan: "While other higher cost capital options were available to support this expansion (venture capital, etc.), the MBDA loan is allowing Lighthouse Broadband to spend more capital where it needs to be spent: on the network itself. The MBDA has been a key partner for this project."

## Promoting Energy-Efficiency

**MPSC Releases Status Report on Michigan's Future Electric Capacity Needs:** The Michigan Public Service Commission (MPSC) released a status report on Michigan's future electric capacity needs. A major electric planning process has not been undertaken by any state agency since the Michigan Electric Options Study (MEOS) conducted from 1985 to 1987. The MPSC in October last year launched a Capacity Need Forum (CNF) charged with investigating the state's potential need for additional electric generation in the future. The forum is charged with assessing Michigan's power needs, reviewing resource addition policies, and recommending the best mix of resources, if needed. Over 200 individuals representing 47 groups have participated in the CNF, including utilities, customer groups, independent power producers, environmental organizations and other governmental organizations. The purpose of the status report is to provide an update on what has been discussed and any preliminary findings. The final report is due by Jan. 1, 2006. Highlights of the report (which is available in its entirety at <http://www.michigan.gov/mpsc>) are:

- Participants have been divided into five work groups: electric demand; central station generation; alternate renewable energy generation; transmission; and integration. Each work group produced a draft report. An analysis was performed on three regions: Southeast Michigan, the rest of the Lower Peninsula and the Upper Peninsula.
- Current resources are adequate to meet existing need. Electric demand is expected to grow by about 2 percent annually. The report anticipates the need for new resources of between 400 and 500 megawatts (MW) by 2009. (A new electric generating plant typically would be between 500 and 1,000 MW.) The final report will include recommendations on the best resources that would meet this need. Available resource options include new power plant generation (including peaker, cycling and base load plants, using a variety of different fuel sources); expanded transmission; renewable energy technology; energy efficiency and demand response programs; and combined heat and power options.

## Collecting Unpaid Taxes to Protect Michigan Businesses & Workers

**Wage & Hour Staff Helps on State Police Raids:** Recently, the Michigan State Police raided 17 Chinese buffet-style restaurants and 21 residences in the Lower Peninsula, used to house suspected undocumented workers from the restaurants. Investigators believe the restaurants may have bilked the state and federal governments out of several million dollars in sales, unemployment and use taxes and violated state and federal wage and hour laws and operated an alleged modern day indentured servant system. Wage & Hour Division investigators assisted state and local police in seizing records at five of the restaurants. The seized records, which are in Chinese and must be translated, will be examined by Wage & Hour staff and other state and federal officials.

**SES Bankruptcy Costs UI Fund \$10 million:** The bankruptcy of Simplified Employment Services (SES) has cost the state's unemployment insurance (UI) trust fund \$10 million in unpaid taxes and unemployment benefit payments to SES workers that the fund must absorb. One of the nation's best-known professional employer organizations (PEO), SES filed for bankruptcy in 2001. At one point, it had more than 1,000 small businesses as clients, employing thousands of workers in Michigan. The Unemployment Insurance Agency (UIA) had been investigating SES for SUTA (state unemployment tax act) dumping because it had been moving payroll from company to company to pay less in state unemployment taxes. SES is a prime example of why Michigan needs client-level reporting for PEOs to deter SUTA dumping.

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**UIA Orders 215 to Repay Jobless Benefits:** The Unemployment Insurance Agency (UIA) has ordered 215 workers with Atlantic Automotive, an Benton Harbor auto supplier, to repay unemployment benefits they began receiving while on temporary layoffs and continued to claim after returning to work. Seventy-five workers were found to have intentionally misrepresented their employment status. Another 140 failed to correctly report some earnings, such as holiday, training or vacation pay, while collecting unemployment benefits. The agency deemed these failures to report earnings as unintentional. In total, the 215 must repay \$693,419 in unemployment benefits. The 75 who intentionally defrauded the agency must pay an additional \$2.3 million in penalties. If the agency is not compensated, it will begin collection efforts that could lead to liens against personal property and tax returns.

## Assisting Michigan Businesses & Workers

**Workers' Compensation Agency Refunds \$53.3M to Some Employers in 2004:** In 2004, the Workers' Compensation Agency (WCA) authorized the refund of nearly \$53.3 million in unused premiums to employers, who belong to group self-insured programs for workers' compensation coverage. The refund was made for past premiums that were paid but not used to pay claims or administrative expenses. The group self-insurance program is for smaller employers in the same industry and allows them to pool their resources to fund their own workers' compensation coverage. Michigan has 35 group self-insured funds, covering workers with 10,120 employers. The WCA approves establishment of the funds and monitors their operations. The agency also approves the premiums they charge, and any dividend distributions they make.

**UIA Answers Phone Claims and Inquiries in Less than a Minute:** Since last year, the Unemployment Insurance Agency (UIA) has dramatically improved its response time for answering telephone calls from workers filing unemployment claims or inquiring about their claims. According to data for the first five months of 2005, the agency was, on average, able to reduce its answering time for calls from those filing unemployment claims to 48 seconds and from those inquiring about their claims to 44 seconds. Last year for the same time period, it took the agency about five times longer to answer these calls. The improvement occurred as staff received more training and gained more experience with the telephone-based system.

**Workers' Compensation Agency Reaches Milestone with EDI:** The Workers' Compensation Agency (WCA) has reached a milestone with its Electronic Data Interchange (EDI) system. The agency recently received its first EDI Proof of Coverage file from the Farm Bureau Insurance Company, one of the state's largest writers of workers' compensation coverage. The event is significant because it means the agency is now able to accept proof of coverage data electronically. Carriers will no longer have to submit hard copy forms, which WCA must then process manually. Insurance companies are required to provide verification to WCA whenever they begin insuring an employer, make a change to the policy or terminate coverage. They must also send coverage information to the Compensation Advisory Organization of Michigan (CAOM). Once a company has gone through a testing process and been approved for EDI, they only need to send information to CAOM, which electronically forwards all pertinent data to WCA. The agency then edits and loads the file into its database and sends an electronic acknowledgment to CAOM which forwards it to the insurance company. EDI is a win-win situation for everyone. Insurance companies no longer need to generate paper forms, and they fulfill their filing requirements quicker. WCA does not have to manually process the forms and receives the data faster and more accurately.

**DLEG Seeking Applications by Sept. 9th for Workers' Compensation Board of Magistrates:** The DLEG Qualifications Advisory Committee (QAC) is seeking qualified applicants for positions on the Workers' Compensation Board of Magistrates. Applications from all those wishing to apply must be received by September 9, 2005. Vacancies are expected on the board effective January 26, 2006. An applicant must be a member in good standing with the State Bar of Michigan and have five years experience as an attorney in the field of workers' compensation or successfully complete an examination. The examination will be offered on September 16, 2005 in Lansing. Applicants taking the Board of Magistrates examination will be tested on their knowledge of the Workers' Disability Compensation Act, Michigan Rules of Evidence, fact-finding skills and knowledge of human anatomy and physiology. Those who previously passed the exam do not have to retake it. Attorneys who successfully complete the exam or meet the five years' experience requirement will be interviewed by the QAC in October to determine their suitability for the position, especially with regard to their objectivity. Applicants who were interviewed and recommended to the governor in October 2004 must reapply if they are still interested, however, they do not need to be re-interviewed. If they reapply, their names will be sent to the governor with the same recommendations they received in October 2004. If any of these individuals wish to be re-interviewed, the QAC will interview them again and make new recommendations based on the second interviews. Application forms are available on the agency's web site at <http://www.michigan.gov/wca> or by calling 517-322-1106. Send to: Qualifications Advisory Committee (ATTN: Susan Bickel), Michigan Department of Labor & Economic Growth, Workers' Compensation Agency, P.O. Box 30016, Lansing, MI 48909.

## Developing a 21st Century Workforce

**Governor Announces Job Training for Parker Hannifin in Otsego:** Governor Granholm announced a \$269,999 Economic Development Job Training (EDJT) grant to improve the skills of 900 workers at Parker Hannifin Corporation in Otsego and Richland. The grant, provided by the MEDC, will provide technical process and quality training for 800 current and 100 new employees. Under terms of the award, the Upjohn Institute for Employment Research will be the grant administrator with Parker Hannifin providing a minimum 25 percent funding match. With annual sales approaching \$8 billion, Parker Hannifin is the world's leading diversified manufacturer of motion and control technologies and systems, providing precision-engineered solutions for a wide variety of commercial, mobile, industrial and aerospace markets.

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**Job Training Grant to Boost Worker Skills at Midland County Company:** Also on June 28, the Governor announced an EDJT grant of \$15,000 to boost the skills of 30 workers at International Engineering & Manufacturing Inc. (IEM). The manufacturer and distributor of snowmobile track components is located in the community of Hope. The grant, provided by the MEDC, will help 25 current and five new employees receive manufacturing process and computer software training. Under the terms of the award, Delta College will be the grant administrator and IEM will provide a minimum 25 percent funding match. Since 1994, more than \$260 million in EDJT grants have helped over half a million Michigan workers improve their skills and enhance the competitiveness of their employers.

**Grant Will Boost Worker Skills at Alcoa Howmet Castings in Whitehall:** Governor Granholm on July 13 announced a \$200,000 EDJT grant to upgrade the skills of 850 workers at Alcoa Howmet Castings in Whitehall. The grant, provided by the MEDC, will provide employees with specialized training in streamlined and more efficient advanced manufacturing methods. Under the terms of the award, the Muskegon/Oceana Consortium will be the grant administrator with Alcoa Howmet providing a minimum 25 percent funding match. Alcoa Investment Cast and Forged Products, a wholly owned subsidiary of Alcoa, is the world's largest manufacturer of precision-cast super alloy and titanium components for aerospace and industrial gas turbine engines and non-aerospace applications. Headquartered in Cleveland, Alcoa Investment Cast and Forged Products and its affiliates employ more than 8,000 workers at 28 manufacturing facilities in the United States, Canada, France, the United Kingdom and Japan. The company's Whitehall facility employs more than 2,400 workers.

## Assisting Michiganians with Disabilities

**Michigan Career & Technical Institute Complimented by National Accrediting Agency:** The Michigan Career & Technical Institute (MCTI), a state-operated school that provides career training for adults with disabilities, has been re-accredited by the nation's premier accrediting agency in the human services field. The Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF) has granted MCTI a three-year accreditation through April 2008. Operated by Michigan Rehabilitation Services in the Department of Labor & Economic Growth, MCTI first achieved CARF accreditation in 1979. The school is located in southwestern Barry County, about 20 miles northeast of Kalamazoo. "We have worked hard to maintain a solid training program and set of support services, and so we are very pleased with the survey report," said Dennis Hart, MCTI director. "Because we are a small, rural school, we can be responsive to individual needs, and I think that is what sets us apart." The CARF report, based on a three-day visit of the school in April by CARF representatives, contained these observations about MCTI:



**Michigan Congressman John Schwarz (center) was the honored guest and speaker at MCTI's July 9 graduation ceremony. Also in the photo are MCTI Director Dennis Hart (left) and Supervisor of Instruction Paul Mulka. MCTI was re-accredited by the nation's premier accrediting agency in the human services field.**

- The school's instructors are dedicated and highly qualified
- The school's leaders are accessible and attuned to the needs and preferences of the students
- Students are very complimentary about MCTI, particularly the staff
- The school's placement office enjoys strong support from employers
- MCTI places a high priority on providing accommodations so that students can get the most out of their training

Graduates have a "competitive edge" because of the school's extensive curricula in employability skills training MCTI offers training in 13 career areas – automotive technology, business support services, cabinetmaking/millwork, culinary arts, custodial, drafting, electronics servicing technology, grounds maintenance/landscaping, health careers, machine technology, office automation, printing, and retail marketing. About 250 students graduate each year with a certificate in one of these areas. For more information about MCTI, log onto [www.michigan.gov/mcti](http://www.michigan.gov/mcti), or call toll-free 1-877-901-7360 (voice/TTY).

**MPSC Approves Captioned Telephone Service for Hearing Impaired and Handicapped Individuals:** The Michigan Public Service Commission (MPSC) today approved an application by the Michigan Relay Center Advisory Board (Board) to allow SBC Michigan to offer enhanced access to switched telecommunications networks through the use of Captioned Telephone Service (CapTel) for the hearing impaired and handicapped. SBC Michigan is the current telecommunication relay system (TRS) provider in Michigan. The Commission on March 29 issued an order seeking public comment on the Board's application. The MPSC received comments from 20 individuals, as well as from the Telecommunications Association of Michigan, Verizon North Incorporated, Verizon North Systems, and the Michigan Department of Labor and Economic Growth (Division of Deaf and Hard of Hearing). All comments favored granting the application. Noting that CapTel enhancement will permit some individuals to use the TRS who currently are not able to, the Commission adopted the Board's proposal. It also noted that the additional cost per service line, expected to be \$0.01 per line per month in the first year, is reasonable. In approving the application, the MPSC directed SBC Michigan to file an annual report by April 1 of each year that reconciles the funding revenues with the expenses incurred for the relay system. In addition, the report will include a review of the implementation process for CapTel, details on the number of CapTel customers, recurring and one-time implementation costs, and any customer satisfaction measurements.



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## Serving Spanish Speaking Citizens

**OFIS Releases Publications in Spanish:** The Office of Financial and Insurance Services announced that they have released some of their most popular free consumer publications in Spanish. "Michigan's diversity presents us with opportunities to provide information in a variety of forms," said Commissioner Linda A. Watters. "Providing key consumer protection information to Spanish speaking Michigan citizens enables them to take advantage of information that we sometimes take for granted." The publications released are:

***Breve Explicacion del Seguro "No-Fault" de Michigan***

(Brief Explanation of Michigan No-Fault Insurance)

[http://www.michigan.gov/documents/BRIEF\\_EXP\\_OF\\_MI\\_NOFAULT\\_SPANISH\\_130271\\_7.pdf](http://www.michigan.gov/documents/BRIEF_EXP_OF_MI_NOFAULT_SPANISH_130271_7.pdf)

***Guia de Consumidores para el Seguro "No-Fault" de Michigan***

(Consumer's Guide to No-Fault Automobile Insurance In Michigan)

[http://www.michigan.gov/documents/CONS\\_GUIDE\\_to\\_no-fault\\_SPANISH\\_130277\\_7.pdf](http://www.michigan.gov/documents/CONS_GUIDE_to_no-fault_SPANISH_130277_7.pdf)

***Seguro de Propietarios de Vivienda Comparacion de las Pólizas de Costo de Reemplazo Con las de Costa de Reparaciones***

(Homeowners Insurance: Replacement Cost vs. Repair Cost Policies)

[http://www.michigan.gov/documents/HOMEOWNERS\\_INS\\_SPANISH\\_130278\\_7.pdf](http://www.michigan.gov/documents/HOMEOWNERS_INS_SPANISH_130278_7.pdf)

***Debo Albergar Sospechas?***

(Should I be Suspicious?)

[http://www.michigan.gov/documents/SHOULD\\_I\\_BE\\_SUSPICIOUS\\_SPANISH\\_130279\\_7.pdf](http://www.michigan.gov/documents/SHOULD_I_BE_SUSPICIOUS_SPANISH_130279_7.pdf)

Also expected to be released soon is ***Ahogar en la Deuda (Drowning in Debt)***. These publications are available on the OFIS website at <http://www.michigan.gov/ofis> in the publications section, or can be requested by the public toll free at 1-877-999-6442.

OFIS also has available publications from industry associations that are published in Spanish, including:

***PARE el Fraude de la Hipoteca***

(STOP Mortgage Fraud)

<http://www.stopmortgagefraud.com/spanish/index.htm>

Published by the Mortgage Bankers Association of America

It is also expected that these publications will be released in Arabic in the near future.